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**REMARKS
BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA**

**IFTAR DINNER
CMR
JULY 23, 2013**

Asalaam 'malaikum and good evening.

Ramadan is a special time.

Ramadan is a time of introspection, a time of reflection, a time to consider the past, to anticipate the future, a time for family and friends, a time to contemplate our many blessings from God.

I truly have been greatly blessed.

Blessed by the good fortune to spend a fifth of my career in Bangladesh.

Blessed by many friendships with the people of this nation, so many friends who have inspired me, challenged me, encouraged me. Many of these friends are here in this room this evening.

I am blessed by the opportunity to crisscross Bangladesh from Tetulia to Teknaf, from Sylhet to Sakhira. Everywhere I go I discover that this is not a poor country, though there are many poor people.

Bangladesh is a blessed country, blessed with rich soil, ample water, a climate that allows up to three growing seasons a year, huge deposits of coal, significant reserves of natural gas ... a country blessed by a rich, diverse, sophisticated culture ... a country blessed by the finest people on earth, and I mean that quite literally.

God has indeed been generous to us and to Bangladesh.

We must be thankful for these blessings.

We must safeguard the blessings that God has bestowed upon us.

This past year has witnessed great tragedy with horrible industrial fires and a building collapse. Those tragedies were not accidents; they were the result of greed and corruption as some abused the blessings that God gave this nation. We must ensure such abuses are never repeated.

... and as the nation approaches its next elections, we all must work together to ensure that peace, harmony, stability prevail so the democratic process can march forward unimpeded, so the great people of this wonderful nation can build their lives ... can build Sonar Bangla.

I thank you for coming this evening and sharing with us this occasion as we thank God for His bountiful generosity to us as individuals and to Bangladesh.

Thank you.

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**As prepared for delivery*